

Open School East: Open Call for Associate Artists 2023-24

Deadline for applications:

Sunday 30 July 2023, 5PM GMT

Interviews:

Tuesday 8 + Wednesday 9 August 2023 (45 minute interview per applicant)

Open Day:

Meet OSE team & find out more about the programme & building. **TBA**

We are seeking applications from emerging & aspiring artists to join the eleventh year of Open School East's independent, self-directed and outward-facing development programme. Please be aware that this programme is for practitioners that, without this opportunity, may face challenges in accessing the arts sector and/or developing their practice due to barriers such as limited financial resources, discrimination, health challenges, disabilities & caring responsibilities.

As an organisation committed to anti-racism, LGBTQIA+ rights and neuro-inclusion, we particularly welcome applications from individuals who identify with this ethos.

Please read the OSE Code of Conduct here: openschooleast.org/about

CONTENTS:

- 2 About Open School East
- 3 Associate Programme - Overview
- 5 Associate Programme - Curriculum 2023-24
- 10 About the Lead Artist 2023/24
- 11 The Associates
- 14 Application Requirements & Process

About Open School East

Established in 2013 and located in the coastal town of Margate, Open School East is a free, independent art school that focuses on collective learning through the arts and community partnerships. We support cultural practitioners at an early stage of their career to develop and sustain their practice, and enable young people and adults alike to learn new and transferable skills, develop their confidence and shape their creative voice by becoming active learners and co-producers of OSE's programmes.

Our learning and development programmes are:

- **The Associates Programme:** A part-time, year-long development programme for emerging adult artists & cultural practitioners from diverse backgrounds
- **The Young Associates Programme:** A project by project programme for young people aged 18-21 living in the Thanet area.
- **The Despacito Art School:** An arts programme for 5 to 12 year olds and their families from Cliftonville, Margate, working with invited artists to develop art projects and works together.
- **The Public Programme:** A multifaceted programme of events, activities and short courses run by Associates and invited practitioners, these are promoted publicly and open to everyone to sign up to and attend.

Open School East is committed to making the arts a more open and diverse sector ensuring that we are enabling meaningful cultural and social exchanges between artists, local communities and the broader public. We do this by making our programmes entirely free of charge and opening them outwards, responding to our locality and embedding them in the places we live & work in through community and cultural

partnerships. We provide an informal and welcoming environment for the development and sharing of knowledge and skills across all communities and generations.

Associates Programme Overview

The Associates Programme is a free development programme offering a critical, informal and non-competitive environment in which you can develop your practice and expand your networks. The programme is run according to principles of collaboration, experimentation and openness, and welcomes those who engage with these notions in different ways.

The Associates Programme runs for one year and is principally self-directed, creating platforms to experiment and meet long-lasting collaborators and peers.

Each year OSE's Artistic Director, Polly Brannan, invites a lead artist to develop aspects of the curriculum. This is a great opportunity to work with an established artist and learn together new ways of working and insights into their practice and approach as part of a group, collaborative project.

OSE's Artistic Director also invites a guest curator in the last term, who has experience of developing exhibitions, to support the current cohort of Associate Artists in how best to share and present their work as part of a group exhibition.

We provide the Associates with:

- A shared workspace with 24/7 access
- Opportunity to develop educational workshops and events with and for the wider school
- Weekly tuition and mentorship from internationally renowned practitioners, theorists and curators

- Throughout the year Associates meet and work with invited guest artists, curators and other creative professionals through the Visiting Artist Module
- The tools and means to conceive and deliver a public programme of workshops and events around your practice and shared interests
- Opportunities to showcase work and ensure visibility of Associates work to art professionals (curators, commissioners, funders, gallerists, producers etc.) to support next stage of Associates professional development and their career in the arts
- A final exhibition of work presented at Open School East, local Galleries and within community settings through OSE community partnerships to local, national audiences, OSE stakeholders and wider visual arts sector
- Critical, pastoral and practical support
- Continued support through OSE Alumni opportunities

The Associates are expected to live/move to the local area* and must commit to the scheduled two days a week timetable (Mondays and Tuesdays) at OSE to receive tuition, meet their mentors, plan public activities and collaborate on projects. We expect Associates to make use of their studios during the rest of the week, working around their own work schedules & commitments.

Tuition is delivered through a combination of workshops, seminars, group crits, excursions and reading groups, some of which are open to the public. During the final weeks of the programme Associates must be able to commit to contributing work towards the end of year Associate Exhibition.

*If you have particular needs in this respect OSE will review this on a case by case basis

Associate Programme - Curriculum 2023-24

The Associates Programme is structured around three terms with various modules and outcomes as part of a yearly structure and approach. For the 2023-2024 iteration of the programme, the cohort will focus on the following activities:

TERM 1 - 25/09/23-15/12/23

- **Introductory Week:** A week to settle in, meet the other Associates & the OSE team, explore Margate and the school itself.
- **Mentoring Programme - Introduction Workshops:** Associates will be introduced to OSE Mentors and their individual practices through a series of group workshops and artist talks.
- **Social Practice Module:** The Social Practice Module is a series of talks & workshops, devised by Polly Brannan (OSE Artistic Director), that explores and unpacks what it means to be working collaboratively with communities, and helps to form a deeper understanding of social practice and engagement.

The module invites guests that include commissioners, researchers, practitioners/artists, curators who are leading in their field. Past invitees have included; Viviana Checchia, Amal Khalaf, Anna Cutler, Sepake Angiama & Polly Brannan.

- **‘Circulating Energies’ with Artist Hugh Nicholson:** This is a partnership of cross border collaboration and exchange between France and UK, as part of the Triennial of Art & Industry, based in Dunkirk (10.06.2023 — 14.01.2024) in partnership with Frac Grand Large, ESA and Open School East.

A number of Associates will have the opportunity to develop a programme of public events in early January 2024 as part of the Triennial in Dunkirk (France) in collaboration with ESA Art School and their students & artist Hugh Nicholson. This opportunity has been developed with Hugh as part of his ongoing residency research which looks at green energy options as an alternative to current energy production methodologies. Hugh will also be developing a series of mentoring and artist talks at OSE.

- **Open House** - Associates hold a collective event; which often takes the form of an open studio event at the end of Term 1. You can view documentation from Open House 22/23 here: openschooleast.org/events/ose-2022-open-house
- **Print Project with Park Press:** This module explores publishing in artistic practice, looking at ways of sustainably distributing and/or communicating projects through print. For its 2023/24 iteration, Park Press (George Harding) will lead a short course that looks to develop Associate print & publishing skills using their Risograph studio.

TERM 2 - 08/01/24 - 29/04/24

- **Lead Artist Project:** This term is a collective learning project developed in collaboration with the invited OSE Lead Artist for 2023-24: [the vacuum cleaner](#).

You will be working with Artist and Activist *the vacuum cleaner*, working on a slow process in the context of The Beacon, a NHS community mental health space in neighbouring Thanet town, Ramsgate as part of this year's lead artist curriculum at Open School East.

This is an opportunity to work with an artist that blends research, process and exhibitions to reimagine mental health support and the environments this support happens in. *the vacuum cleaner* has experience of working with vulnerable adults and young people, and developing collaborative ways of working within community settings/mental health care settings.

Guided by a steering and accountable group, this process will support the Associates to use this space to learn and develop a shared way of making new work with a focus on community, disability, mental health and space.

As a collective of artists you will be working across both sites of Open School East and The Beacon developing new artwork as a group and collaboratively with others. This approach has been developed to enable you to learn and lean into potential social practice elements in your artistic practice and/or map the learnings from these methodologies and approaches onto your own art practice.

Through workshops, training, support and guidance you will have the opportunity to develop in context the making and learning about disability justice through making work and a series of workshops.

- **Associate led Public Programme:** A series of free, open public events, shaped by the Associates and includes; participatory events/workshops, talks, reading groups, short courses, performances etc which are devised and led entirely by the current cohort of OSE Associates; this programme nurtures artistic planning and delivery skills in a public setting. The sessions Associates have programmed have ranged from writing workshops, experimental film and radio production, performance

and photography and short courses in electronics, ceramics, music production. **You can view our archive of events [here](#).**

This programme is in partnership with [Turner Contemporary](#)

- **Mentoring (1-1):** Throughout the year Associates meet their mentors for one to one tutorials to discuss their work, research and ideas, both in general and in preparation for public events and the final show. Recent mentors have included: Benedict Drew, Clair Le Couteur, Melika Ngombe Kolongo, Simeon Barclay and Sally O'Reilly.

Previous mentors include: Anthea Hamilton, åbäke, Matthew Darbyshire, Kodwo Eshun and Anjalika Sagar (The Otolith Group), Marguerite Humeau, Paul Maheke, Janna Graham, Sophie Mallet, Sarah McCrory, John Douglas Millar, Tom Morton, Olivia Plender, Marijke Steedman, Trish Scott, Ed Webb-Ingall.

TERM 3 - 08/05/24 - 05/07/24

- **Associate led Public Programme** is a series of free, open public events, shaped by the Associates and includes; participatory events/ workshops, talks, reading groups, short courses, performances etc which are devised and led entirely by the current cohort of OSE Associates; this programme nurtures artistic planning and delivery skills in a public setting. The sessions Associates have programmed have ranged from writing workshops, experimental film and radio production, performance and photography and short courses in electronics, ceramics, music production. **You can view our archive of events [here](#).**

- **Mentoring (1-1):** Throughout the year Associates meet their mentors for one to one tutorials to discuss their work, research and ideas, both in general and in preparation for public events and the final show.
- **OSE Associate Exhibition 23/24:** Associates work towards an end of year exhibition and collaborate with an invited guest curator to take them through the process; alongside advice from their mentors and guidance from the OSE Director and team.

The Associate Exhibition is an opportunity for the current cohort of Associate Artists to share their work to arts professionals (nationally), prospective collaborators, funders and peers and the wider public. This is curated with the invited Guest Curator invited by OSE Artistic Director who has expertise in exhibition making. Past curators include; Sepake Angiama (Iniva), Angelica Sule (Site Gallery), Cedric Fauq (Musée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux) & Maggie Matic (Studio Voltaire).

About the Lead Artist 2023/24

the vacuum cleaner is the name of a UK based artist and activist who makes candid, provocative and playful work.

the vacuum cleaner wants to find better ways to go mad. Drawing on his own experience of mental health disability, he works with groups including young people, health professionals and vulnerable adults to challenge how mental health is understood, treated and experienced.

With roots in activism and radical art, *the vacuum cleaner* has created one-man interventions and large-scale actions as well as performance, installation and film. His work has been shown in galleries, theatres, hospitals and schools and has appeared on streets and in public spaces internationally.

Recent commissions and project partners include: Manchester International Festival/, Chisenhale Gallery, Wellcome Collection, National Gallery of Indonesia, Festspiele/Gessnerallee (Zurich), Mayor of London.

the vacuum cleaner is James. He works from his Margate studio with his dog, Doris. He co-founded the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination 2004 – 09. He received the Paul Hamlyn Breakthrough Fund 2018 and Arts Council NPO from 2023.

The Associates

Associates at Open School East are emerging practitioners with or without a BA, MA or formal arts qualification, who are seeking a critical, informal and non-competitive environment in which to develop their practice.

We are particularly committed to supporting applicants from under-represented backgrounds and without formal training.

You will join a group of approximately 10 Associates from a diverse range of practices and backgrounds.

Former Associates continue to work collaboratively and programme events and projects at OSE, engaging in dialogue with the current Associates and forming a growing community of alumni, staff and mentors.

What experience do Associates need to have?

- We do not expect you to have any previous experience of working with vulnerable people or within community/civic spaces before but expect an interest and willingness to learn.
- You do not need to be a social practice artist. Working with the invited lead OSE Artist through the curriculum is primarily an opportunity to learn through working directly with each other to open up and respond in new ways with your own practice and expertise.
- We encourage a diverse cohort of visual artists with varied skills, experience, varying practices and mediums that you already work with; film, sound, painting, sculpture, installation, photography, social practice, community practice, research based work etc.

The Associate Programme is an opportunity to learn how to develop collaborative ways of working from an expert in this field. We expect this learning and work to be visible in the work and programmes you curate and develop in your own practice throughout the year with us at Open School East but firmly encourage an artist led approach from each Associate. Varying interests, skills and experiences ensures a diverse cohort which ensures that we are learning from one another as a cohort and as an organisation.

Practical information

The Associates Programme will start on 25 September 2023 and run until 5 July 2024, with breaks in the winter and in the spring.

Tuition, project working and group meetings are concentrated on Mondays and Tuesdays (typically between 10AM-5PM), however these might occasionally take place on other days. We will start the year with a 4 day induction week, from 25-28 September. Every Associate must attend this important moment to meet the other Associates.

Successful applicants will need to ensure that they can fully commit to OSE for the duration of the programme. As such, the Associates should not engage in residencies or other durational activities, including starting a BA or MA, while undertaking OSE's Associates Programme.

Due to Open School East being a non-accredited programme, we regret that we are not able to sponsor visa applications for overseas Associates.

As a free education and learning programme, Open School East does not grant bursaries, nor does it provide Associates with accommodation. However, our team will provide guidance on finding accommodation and employment in Margate to anyone moving to the town. We further

provide guidance on life in Margate, and on local and social services and facilities.

Space and Facilities

Open School East operates from a building at 39 Hawley Square in central Margate. The building is currently only accessible by stairs and we are working towards making a fully accessible school building in the future.

The building includes dedicated spaces for each of OSE's programmes as well as shared studio spaces for the sole use of Associates, which are accessible 24/7. OSE has four further studios rented out to OSE Alumni, local visual artists and practitioners working in the community/education sector. Basic tools and AV equipment are available for Associates to use and kitchen and toilet access is shared with other learners and studio holders.

Application Process

Please note that we take applications from individuals only.

The course is free to enable access to arts education that may not have been previously possible due to cultural barriers and/or socioeconomic factors.

Your application can take the form of either a .PDF file (max size 10mb) or a .MOV video (max duration 4 min). Whichever form you choose, please title it following this model: Firstname_Surname.pdf

Your application should contain:

1. **A Statement:** please tell us about yourself, your background, artistic practice, theoretical and/or life interests. Please limit your response to 700 words or 2 minutes if using video.

For your statement please think about and answer the following questions:

- Why are you applying to Open School East specifically?
- What do you hope to gain from spending a year at OSE?
- How does the 2023/24 Curriculum and the OSE Mentors relate to your interests and practice?
- What interests you about working with this year's Lead Artist, the vacuum cleaner?
- What would you like to bring to OSE? This could include practical skills, areas of interest and/or research ambitions.
- Can you explain why you feel that the free education & development offer at Open School East is important to your personal situation, and how will this help you and your development as an artist?

2. **A CV:** please don't forget to include your address, telephone number and email address (1 side of A4 max – you can also incorporate this in the video, if that is your chosen format).
3. **A Portfolio:** Up to 10 pages presenting your recent work. Besides images and captions, feel free to include text and web links to video and sound works – please do not send us wetransfer links. (If doing this part on video, please limit your response to 2.5 minutes.)
4. **An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form:** The form is available [here](#). This data helps us to ensure that our processes are fair and transparent, and that diverse communities are represented. We cannot process your application without this form.

The deadline for applications is **Sunday 30 July 2023, 5PM GMT**. Please send all of the above to: applications@openschooleast.org. You will receive an automated answer confirming receipt of your application.

Prospective Associates will be selected on the following criteria:

- Quality of ideas
- A recognised need to access free and informal education
- A genuine interest in being part of a group of people with different practices and experiences
- A curiosity to expand one's knowledge base and engage with a range of topics and ideas
- A willingness to work collaboratively and share space with others, be self-directed and interact with members of the public at different moments.

All shortlisted applicants will hear from us on Wednesday 2 August and be invited for an interview (est. 45 minutes per applicant) on either Tuesday 8 or Wednesday 9 August 2023.

Non-shortlisted applicants will also be notified on Wednesday 2 August. We expect a high number of applications; for this reason we are only able to give personalised feedback to applicants who are shortlisted.

For additional questions on the application process, or if you wish to discuss your application outside of the scheduled open evening or day, you can email: george@openschooleast.org and we will do our best to arrange a conversation with you. Before emailing us your questions and applying, we encourage you to have a thorough look at our website.

openschooleast.org